REVIEW.

La Pêche dans les eaux douces du Cambodge: Tome I, Texte et 48 planches 193 pages; Tome II, 7 Cartes, par P. Chevey et F. le Poulain;

Mémoires de l'Institut Océanographique de l'Indochine;

Les Batraciens de l'Indochine, par R. Bourret, 547 pages;

Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'Institut 1937-8, par P. Chevey.

L'Institut Océanographique de l'Indochine published in 1940 and recently presented to the Library of the Thailand Research Society three large in-quarto volumes, two concerning fishing in all the rivers of Cambodia, with seven large maps in colours annexed, and one volume on the Batrachians. Both Doctors of Sciences, P. Chevet and R. Bourret must be congratulated for these splendid publications of long labour.

Fishing in the rivers of Cambodia has, these last seventy years, been the subject of many reports, the first one having been published as early as 1865, by Professor Thorel, and a second one by Professor Jouan in 1866.

But with the foundation in 1930 by Governor-General Pasquier of the Institut Océanographique de l'Indochine starts the real and most important work, economically speaking, concerning the fresh water fishes and fishing in Indochina. If ichtyology is in itself a fundamental science; limnology, *i. e.* conditions concerning the breeding and living of fishes is another one, specially in Cambodia where fisheries are plentiful, specially all around the Great Lake supplied by the Tonlé Sap, tributary of the Mekhong. It is in fact the mightiest of all the Indochinese rivers, and no other river in the world presents such a remarkable series of rapids and whirlpools.

As already said, the lower course of the Mekhong is connected with the Tonlé Sap, or the Great Lake of Cambodia. The Great Lake lies in a shallow depression in the alluvial plain of the Mekhong delta. The waters of the lake drain into the Mekhong, except in seasons of flood when the river sends a back current into the lake, raising the level 20 feet and making the lake 3 or 4 times its usual size. Then at its greatest, it measures 70 miles in length and about 15 miles in average breadth. At that time it is full of excellent fish, the catching and curing of which give constant occupation to the lake-dwellers who live in houses built on common platforms raised on piles over the lake.

In a short review as this, it is not possible to give all the names of fishes found in this tropical zone. But we must thank Dr. Chevey for the care he has taken in giving us the scientific names of the fishes as well as their Annamite, Cambodian and Malay names. Most of these fishes are to be found, salted, dried or fresh, in many market-places of the East and their production is a boon to everyone. In these times of restriction fish is not only a staple food for the poor and the rich, but is also of real value, as from certain kinds of fish a good quantity of oil or fat may be recuperated.

The volume on Batrachians by R. Bourret, D. Sc., fully illustrated with colour plates, is a comprehensive contribution to an important part of zoology in Indochina. This invaluable book contains a bibliography with ample indications concerning the morphology and anatomy of Batrachians. A first list of 52 Batrachians had been compiled in 1917, in Thailand. Another by Boulenger was completed by Dr. Smith in 1930. This new one by Dr. Bourret is a compendium of about 1300 different kinds of Batrachians with their names in Latin and the localities where they have been found. Genus, species, variety, type, are remarkably characterized. Nocturnal frog hunting expeditions undertaken by the natives barefooted are mentioned; also the great *tookay* (a cousin to the iguana) and the smaller house-lizard. The *tookay* is considered a lucky house mate and affords some amusement to the lovers of gambling who bet on the number of his sepulchral "took kays." As it must be, *Ranidae* (frogs) cover nearly 200 pages (out of 550) of the book for their natural description. Everybody knows that the eye of the frog is large, pleasing and forming a strong contrast to the repulsive appearance presented by toads, notwithstanding the close affinity between them both in structure and habits. The croaking of numerous frogs in marshy places, or around

ponds and ditches, often make (except at night) an amusing and curious concert. The powers of voice possessed by bull-frogs, *rana agrana rugulosa*, are tremendous.

The use of several kinds of frogs for food is very common in Indo-china and they are regarded as particularly delicate. Frogs *rana cancrivora* are plentiful in the paddy-fields of Thailand and have been described by Dr. Smith in 1917.

Such a book as *Les Batraciens de l'Indochine* should be found in every scientific library not only in the Far East, but in Europe and in America as well. It is a *thesaurus* invaluable for all scientists specialised in the world's zoology.

L. C.